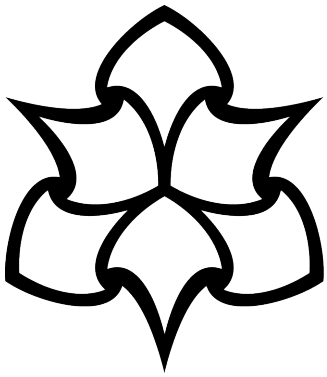

Interlopers in class: A duoethnography of working-class women academics

Abstract

This paper introduces the concept of the interloper for examining classed and gendered dislocation. Focusing on academia, which we view as a classed and gendered field, we draw on Bourdieu and feminist standpoint theory to account for how we, as women of working-class origin, have experienced 'breaches' through which we have come to understand ourselves in classed and gendered terms. Coming from different cultural backgrounds, we also reflect on how understandings of class are context-specific. We employ a duoethnographic method which emphasizes the value of subjective experiences for organizational and social analyses. The paper shows how the concept of the interloper may shed light on the dynamic, relational character of constructions of class and gender; the maintenance work that is performed; and how a sense of permanent inbetweenness characterizes our ongoing movement between the fields of the family and academia.

Keywords: class, gender, academia, habitus, standpoint theory, duoethnography

Introduction

In this paper we employ a Bourdieusian framework to examine classed and gendered social dislocation through the concept of *the interloper.* Following Savage et al. (2015: 1011), who argue for the usefulness of Bourdiuesian approaches for 're-energising class analysis', we draw on Bourdieu in conjunction with a feminist standpoint perspective to critically analyze the situated and relational character of classed and gendered positions and experiences. In doing so we respond to calls for 'work that draws on the various insights of feminist theory in order to theorize both the

social and the societal' (Silius, 2010:281). Our analysis is based on a duoethnographic account of being women academics of working-class background in the English Higher Education sector. Our starting point, as we explain in our methodology, came from a desire to examine classed experiences and practices in the workplace. Class as a basis of discrimination and social exclusion in a professional context has for example been analysed by Ashley and Empson (2013), who draw on Bourdieu to show how lacking particular forms of cultural capital – often typical of candidates from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds – bars entry into prestigious legal firms. Similarly, Zanoni (2011) discusses the pervasive role of class in structuring organizations in terms of how employees and their contributions are valued. While she does not claim to privilege class over other social identities, Zanoni does point towards its abiding significance. In this paper we likewise consider class as a salient social marker, whilst also acknowledging its interrelatedness with other axes of identity. Specifically, we are interested in exploring how 'the connections between class and gender' (Acker, 1988: 473) can be understood in relation to women's experiences of work in academia (see also e.g. Hey, 2003; Loveday, 2016; Reay, 2004a). For this purpose, and with the aim to also offer a means of analysis which can be applied to other contexts, we develop the concept of the interloper, somebody who enters a space 'with a marginal sense of membership' (Ryan and Sackrey, 1984: 123), to examine the trajectory from an ostensibly working-class background to a perceived middle-class occupational standing. Class is in this paper understood as spatially constituted and embodied; as 'configured through cultural and symbolic artefacts' (Lawler, 1999: 5); and as inherently gendered. The concept of the interloper recognizes incidents of felt intrusion as valuable for examining individual experiences as situated within organizational and, more broadly, social relations.

An existing concept used to explain women's tendency to doubt the legitimacy of their professional position is the imposter syndrome (Clance and Imes, 1978). This denotes a felt 'intellectual phoniness' (Clance and O'Toole, 1988: 51) and of having achieved a position through luck or fraud. It is primarily psychological and marked by feelings of 'self-doubt, fear of failure, and guilt about success' (Clance and O'Toole, 1988: 52). It often does not reflect external indicators of success, as many high achievers, in academia and beyond, experience it (see Vaughn et al., 2019). As such imposter syndrome emphasizes intellectual self-doubt and the misrecognition or downplaying of achievement. The interloper, as we propose in this paper, is a concept which denotes a more materialist and objective perspective, reflecting both the subjective experience *and* the objective structural or institutional reality of a person's social position. Our proposed concept of the interloper therefore draws attention to how social relations, and the structural and symbolic landscape within which experiences occur, shape a reflexive understanding of one's position. It also emphasizes, and helps us to explore, the role of reflexivity in recognizing a 'lack of fit' (McNay, 1999) with acceptable forms of classed and gendered expressions in different social arenas. We ground the concept of the interloper in Bourdieu's notions of habitus and capital (1977, 1986, 1990), and feminist standpoint theory (Hartsock, 2003; Smith, 1997; Wood, 2005), to examine ongoing variations in experiences of familiarity and strangeness – that is, degrees of membership of a field – as we move between our communities of origin and academia. In this instance we draw on our situated knowledge (cf. Haraway, 1988) as working-class women academics in the English HE system. However, we do not seek to offer universalizing truths about women of working-class origin. Instead we mobilize Bourdieusian and feminist concepts to articulate the interloper and argue that it offers a novel way to conceptualize difference and belonging, and the tensions between them.

Our contribution to research on class, gender and academia is threefold. First, we extend research on class and gender as a symbolic system that is both 'structured and structuring' (Bourdieu, 1990:2) and make a conceptual contribution by proposing the historicized and socially situated concept of the interloper. Through a collaborative autoethnographic approach known as duoethnography we explore this process as an ongoing negotiation which is socially mediated, spatially situated, and deeply felt. Second, we offer a comparative analysis of understandings and experiences of class related to different cultural backgrounds, as constructed in in-depth dialogue between us. This provides a valuable opportunity to tease out classed meanings as socially produced and subjectively held, and how sociocultural contexts inform subjective understandings of class and classed identities throughout the life course. Third, we broaden research charting the experiences of women working-class faculty through paying specific attention to how the past informs one's self-understanding of the later professional context. When we seek to understand the position of working-class women in academia and other professional contexts, we must consider present experiences as shaped by past events.

In what follows we discuss class as a key category through which lived experience can be understood, by drawing on Bourdieu and feminist standpoint theory to incorporate a gendered dimension of habitus and capital. We frame the family and academia as classed and gendered fields, which we explore through duoethnography. After contextualizing class in our countries of origin, Wales and Finland, we candidly tell of personal experiences related to our understanding of ourselves in classed and gendered terms, in adolescence and in academia. These are discussed in relation to the concept of the interloper, showing the precarious and complex character of the formation and maintenance of classed and gendered identities.

Class, gender and habitus: family and academia

We understand class as a concept that encapsulates lived, embodied experiences; a condition which, to follow Kuhn's (1995: 98) classic description, is deeply felt as 'something beneath your clothes, under your skin, in your reflexes, in your psyche, at the very core of your being'. While material, occupational and educational status shapes class positioning, the *experience* of class cannot necessarily be directly mapped onto such signifiers (Skeggs, 1997). This follows Bourdieu's (1989) conceptualization of the socio-corporeally produced self, or *habitus*; 'a person's embodied history [as] the accrual of memories and knowledge that are embedded as dispositions' (Addison, 2017: 13). These embodied and embedded dispositions shape individual action; internalizing opportunity structures and chances of success and failure that are then externalized in actions, which reproduce social structures (Swartz, 1997). Although experienced individually, habitus represents a shared cultural context, whereby actions reflect the 'the subjective expectation of objective probabilities' (Jenkins, 1992:72). These expectations include internalized ideas of one's own worth and possibility for action arising from doing, and interpreting, social practices as given to us through our social position.

Habitus is formed through the accumulation of economic, social, cultural and symbolic resources, or forms of capital. The distribution of capital systematically links actors to each other as 'agents endowed with different properties' (Bourdieu, 1989: 19). A *field* is the ensuing 'configuration of objective relations between positions' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 97) within which particular hierarchies, and 'rules of the game' apply. Field-specific configurations of forms of capital enable individuals to exercise power and influence, to varying degrees. Symbolic capital is mediated by for example gender, class, and race (Jones, 2015); however, these power relations are obscured so that particular ways of being and knowing become naturalized within a field. Value in the form of symbolic capital is conferred 'upon groups or classes in such a way that they are experienced as

legitimate' (Jenkins, 1992:144). The notion of symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) indicates complicity with naturalized cultural norms, which are perceived as legitimate, even when they contribute to one's social subordination.

Bourdieu's forms of capital are traditionally theorized in ungendered ways, potentially masking the experiences of women (O'Neil and Gidengil, 2006; Reay 2004b). However, McCall (1992: 842) argues that nominal constructions of capital, such as occupation and educational qualifications, cannot be separated from gender, rather, they are shaped by gendered dispositions. McCall (ibid.) thus suggests an 'intimate fit' between gender and class. Building on the socially located, practice-based character of Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital and field, a gendered perspective on class can be elaborated through feminist standpoint theory, which foregrounds 'female experience at a particular time and place, located within a particular set of social relations' (Hartsock, 2003: 303). It takes an embodied, practice-based approach to knowing; seeing knowledge as embedded in 'our lives as we live them in the local particularities …. in which our bodily being anchors us' (Smith, 1997: 393), informed by the 'gendered position of the knower' (Go, 2016: 14). Standpoint theory has been criticized for claiming that particular groups gain epistemic privilege through access to 'authentic', unmediated knowledge by virtue of their position, and for disregarding intersectional differences between women (see e.g. Hekman, 1997). Responses have, however, reiterated that experience is always mediated (e.g. McNay, 2008), and Haraway's (1988: 582) concept of situated knowledges points to the 'particular and specific embodiment' of knowledge, which does not assume a homogeneity of experience of women. We view standpoint theory as useful for acknowledging that 'the position from which we speak (and how we speak) are a product of our positioning vis-à-vis forms of capital' (Skeggs, 1997: 27), and that forms of capital are gendered. McNay (2004) specifically refers to how Bourdieu, whose relational epistemology

places experience at the centre of social analysis but does not attribute privileged status to it, and whose notion of habitus situates experience in a broader social context, is commensurate with a standpoint approach (see also Sweet, 2018). The contexts that primarily interest us in this paper are the family and academia.

The family as field

An early, influential field within which the self is formed is the family, with the strongest and most persistent elements of habitus being formed in early childhood (Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu (1996: 22) argues that the family field is dependent on 'an affective principle of cohesion'. The cohesive narrative of the family is potentially weakened through social mobility and through accrual of forms of capital that are not valued, or are viewed with suspicion, in the field of the family and home community. When leaving the home community to attend university, working-class women risk weakening family and community cohesion through social mobility, which distances them from the field of the family and its gendered expectations of women's physical and emotional availability (Bourdieu, 1996). It may also cause social, economic and psychological rifts; all attesting to the power of family in shaping the habitus. It also illustrates how the past continues to inform the present, including, as Kuhn (1995: 166) remarks, how the stories of those 'who have left their class of origin behind, are often narrated […] in terms of the marginality, the not-belonging, the struggle for identity, of an 'uprooted' narrator'.

The sense of uprooting stems from the sedimented layers of habitus becoming disrupted when moving between fields. This produces existential jolts due to the habitus being un-attuned to a hitherto unknown field (Bourdieu, 2002), potentially posing the threat of a *cleft habitus* 'torn by

contradiction and internal division' (Bourdieu, 2000: 160). Bourdieu argues that social mobility inevitably produces a cleft habitus, as class loyalties and affiliations are tested when the habitus encounters new and contradictory fields. Mouzelis (2007) suggests that reflexivity is enhanced by such tensions, as the experienced breach provides a means to reflexively understand one's position in different social contexts, and to seek to redress the felt dislocation. The unsettling effect of moving between fields means that even a socially upward trajectory is not necessarily a straightforwardly positive experience (Friedman, 2013; Walkerdine, 2003). Also, social mobility is differently conditioned for men and women (Lawler, 1999). Women have fewer cultural resources to draw on than men, such as the 'working-class boy done good' archetype (Allen and Mendick, 2013), and cannot always successfully mobilize symbolic capital (Nielsen, 2017; Ross-Smith and Huppatz, 2010). Here, we are particularly interested in how these dynamics play out in moving from the field of the family to that of academia.

Academia as a classed and gendered field

Education contributes to the accumulation and transferral of cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1984), which, like family, makes it a key site for the formation of habitus. Following Bourdieu (1988: 40), academia constitutes a field with 'its own activity of selection and indoctrination' upholding structures of power and access, including gendered distributions. For example, while nearly half of academic staff in the UK are women, the proportion of women professors is 24% (HESA, 2017). Research shows that academia presents women with institutionalized barriers to advancement and opportunity (Knights and Richards, 2003). Women are disadvantaged, starting from recruitment processes (van den Brink and Benschop, 2011), to failing to correspond to a normative career path or meet criteria of excellence (Bagilhole and

Goode, 2001; Śliwa and Johansson, 2014; van den Brink and Benschop, 2012), to being excluded from key networks, and overlooked for promotion (Bird, 2011; Fisher and Kinsey, 2014).

Regarding class, research on the experiences of both female and male faculty with working-class roots (see Brook and Michell, 2012) has detailed themes of feeling 'distanced from an authentic sense of self, and also from one's past' (Ryan and Sackrey, 1984: 75), while simultaneously not having 'the pleasure of feeling safe in the new location' (Hey, 2003: 325). There may also be guilt or shame at being perceived as 'better' than family and friends back home (Welsch, 2005); an indication of the aforementioned disruption to the cohesion of the family field. Those specifically writing about the experiences of women tell of how classed, masculine hierarchies of academia make it a difficult place for working-class women (Reay, 2004a) owing to the dismissal of their experiences, knowledge, and ways of speaking (Verdi and Ebsworth, 2009; Loveday, 2016). They may be faced with preconceptions of working-class women as 'tough' and 'loud' (Verdi and Ebsworth, 2009) or as 'conscientious, responsible and hard working' (Hoskins, 2010: 137). Women of working-class background may also feel added gratitude, which results in taking on disproportionate teaching and administration loads, or devoting extra time to mentoring students (Tokarczyk and Fay, 1993). However, there is also a sense of academic work being exciting and rewarding (Mahony and Zmroczek, 1997); all adding to the 'ambiguities and intense contradictions' (Hey, 2003: 325) experienced by working-class women academics.

The interloper

The intertwining of habitus, capital and field provides a means for examining how particular bodily displays are construed as signifying legitimate membership (Ross-Smith and Huppatz, 2010) or

conversely as being space invaders (Puwar, 2004) in different settings. Habitus, capital and field are not given, stable entities; instead, they are mutually co-constituted through social relations, which, at particular times in particular spaces produce valorized or abject subjectivities (Skeggs and Loveday, 2012). When analyzing experiences of social dislocation, as is the aim of this paper, we must examine how entry into a social space, and movements between social spaces, are shaped by the shifting meanings of both the individual and the setting; an analysis we propose to be conducted through the concept of the interloper. The interloper, as somebody who 'thrusts himself [sic] into any position or affair, which others consider as pertaining solely to themselves' (OED Online, 2017), provides a framing of the process whereby an outsider enters a field, the rules and values of which are upheld by those already present, who consider themselves its rightful members. Due to the dominant existing configurations of classed and gendered capital, and particularly valued subjectivities, the interloper who enters with a different habitus experiences a jolt (cf. Bourdieu, 2002). The transgression produces an interesting dual positioning. Being in the position of the interloper is, on the one hand, socially precarious in that the very concept indicates that there are exclusionary mechanisms, which seek to protect the field from unwanted and unworthy intruders. On the other hand, the position is also productive in that it points towards the opening up of a reflexive space (Mouzelis, 2007) and provides a view of the field denied those who are in it like 'fish in water' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:127). The experiences of the interloper can be understood through a practice-based standpoint epistemology, which emphasizes the value of the perspective of the potentially unwelcome newcomer, yet acknowledges the intruder's experiences as mediated by the social context into which she has entered, as well as by the social context which has hitherto shaped her habitus. Conceptualizing the interloper through Bourdieu, with feminist standpoint theory, draws into focus the embodied and socially situated character of subjectivity,

experience and knowledge through 'the lived reality of embodied social relations' (McNay, 2008: 5). The interloper is, therefore, historicized and socially situated.

To understand how such social dynamics and experiences are accommodated, counteracted or possibly overcome within the clashing social worlds of the interloper, we follow Kuhn (1995) in exploring our experiences through drawing on personal histories. To contextualize the duoethnographic narratives that follow, we first provide an overview of notions of class in our respective countries of origin.

Class in context: Wales and Finland

Our respective cultural origins form a productive combination for reflecting on class, echoing Jarness and Friedman's (2017) analysis of class in the UK and Norway, where the former is characterized by a long history of class division and the latter by a societal emphasis on egalitarianism. As our citing of Kuhn (1995) suggests, we conceptualize class as a relational, socio-cultural, socio-corporeal and socio-historical lived experience, which endures even for those who have outwardly achieved social mobility. While we use 'class' as a key explanatory category in our analysis, we underscore that its meaning translates differently depending on context.

Wales

Although recent research suggests that most people in the UK consider themselves to be working class (Evans and Mellon, 2015), there is a peculiarly Welsh political and working-class sensibility, which differs from received notions of the British working class (Balsom et al, 1983). In Wales, class is 'associated with place and linked with community' (Evans, 2005: 118), rather than being

based on factors such as home ownership or occupational status. Many Welsh working-class people were politically mobilized in the 1980s during Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government, in response to the deindustrialization of Welsh working-class towns and cities and aggressive challenges to trade unionism (Steber, 2018). Such mobilization was particularly linked to the 1984-85 miners' strike; 'the kind of politicization that comes only once in a lifetime' (Suddick, 2005: 3), solidifying 'the ideological and political basis of community' in Wales (Phillips, 2018: 48). Wales' uneasy relationship with Thatcher was also entangled with its historical relationship with England, and evident in the teaching of Welsh history in schools, which emphasizes invasion, oppression and the forced eradication of the Welsh language in much of south Wales. The post-colonial legacy of Wales' uneasy historical relationship with England continues to resonate today, yet this remains an 'underexplored aspect of habitus' (Baker and Brown, 2008: 59).

It is further argued that Welsh working-class consciousness is marked by an 'active refusal of middle-class identity' (Savage et al., 2010:70). Yet, there is an 'aspirational habitus' (Baker and Brown, 2008: 59) as the 'history and imagery associated with Wales is linked with learning and erudition' (ibid.: 62). There is also working-class cultural capital inherent in the Welsh traditions of poetry and music and the enduring sense of collectivism and community embodied in, for example, male voice choirs (Fredericks, 2015). This cultural capital is also evident in research with economically deprived first-generation Welsh students, who feel they have 'culturally rich backgrounds despite… economic hardship' (Baker and Brown, 2008: 61).

The Welsh and English education systems, although intimately linked, are based upon different social perspectives. Rees (2007:8) argues that 'the distinctiveness of Welsh education policy should be interpreted as a continuation of established, social democratic policy themes'. Such social democratic themes are evident in Wales' lower university fees, its embracing of the comprehensive

system (it has no state grammar schools), and the movement away from National Curriculum testing and the publication of league tables (Whitty, 2006). Indeed, it is suggested that Wales generally has 'a more "progressive" set of values than those in England, with a more collectivist approach' (Adams and Robinson, 2002:199).

Finland

From the 1970s onwards Finland experienced a rapid transformation from an agricultural to an industrial to a service-based economy, which shaped views on class. By the 1980s there was a general perception of the erosion of class differences in favour of a general middle class, as evidenced by the rising standards of living. The new middle class demonstrated changing values in relation to 'orientation to life and work' (Roos and Rahkonen, 1984: 261). Aspirations in terms of career and leisure pursuits were emphasized, with housing, notably ownership, constituting 'a crucial element in the socially rising new middle class' (Roos and Rahkonen, 1984: 267). Changes were particularly noticeable in the increasing levels of education and employment of women (Järvelä, 1983; Lahtinen et al., 2018).

During the economic recession of the 1990s when differences in the distribution of wealth became starker the understanding of class shifted from a focus on economic and social macrostructures to individual differences in income, education, social mobility, occupational status, and consumption patterns (Erola, 2010). In general, class tends to be defined in terms of socio-economic groups rather than social class (Kosunen and Seppänen, 2015). The very concept of class is considered problematic following a Nordic egalitarian ideal (Kivimäki, 2008), which might explain why it is 'a loaded topic, and talking about class has often been seen as inappropriate' (Kolehmainen, 2017: 253), described as being 'more intimate than sex' (Sundström and Söderling, 2009: 7). However,

such attitudes can also serve to paper over differences in opportunities (Käyhkö, 2014). As explorations of individuals' experiences of class show (e.g. Järvinen and Kolbe, 2007; Käyhkö, 2013, 2014), those differences do exist and are felt as such.

Educational expansion played an important part in changes to social structures (Roos and Rahkonen, 1984; Sirniö et al., 2017). The strong tendency towards egalitarianism has shaped the Finnish education system, which is based on a state comprehensive model and wide access to free higher education. Education is seen as promoting social mobility and welfare and is therefore considered a key enabler of equality by 'ensuring that educational achievement is dependent not on circumstances, but rather on effort and choice' (Kivinen et al., 2007: 232). Nevertheless, entry into higher education has been found to correlate with social background, particularly parental occupational status. A belief in opportunities automatically made available through the 'power of education and, above all, […] the "magic" of higher education' (Kivinen et al, 2001: 180) has been eroded. While women's educational level has steadily grown, women of working-class background who enter higher education do so against expectations, sometimes with a fear of 'betraying one's roots' (Käyhkö, 2013: 27).

The different cultural, political and social landscapes in which we grew up informed our interpretations of the meaning of class, and how it might apply to ourselves. Our methodology enables us to explore and reflect on those differences.

Methodology

We ground our research in a feminist epistemology of recognizing that difference and power may be understood through 'the subjective and the "private"' (Davies, 2012: 748). A focus on the personal does not imply an understanding of the individual as a free-floating agent unencumbered

by social forces; instead, echoing Bourdieu's view on the interrelated nature of the individual and the collective, '[personal life] is conceptualized as always already part of the social' (Smart, 2007: 28). Likewise, feminist standpoint theory emphasizes situated knowledge, which shapes 'the social and symbolic conditions and insights of particular groups.' (Wesselius, 2017: 482). To analyze how personal experiences are co-constitutive with the social, we employ a collaborative form of autoethnography called *duoethnography* (Norris et al., 2012). Building on central autoethnographic tenets, whereby the researcher occupies a dual space as both researcher and participant, duoethnography enriches the research process through extending this dual space into a shared space between collaborators.

Our research design included three data sources: 1) autobiographical notes; 2) short personal vignettes; and 3) conversations grounded in our writings (Norris et al., 2012). Following Chang (2008: 73), who suggests that a useful autoethnographic starting point is to create a 'timeline in chronological order to rediscover one's stories', we started by writing individual autobiographical texts going back to childhood. The act of writing is a process of not only 'gathering, questioning and interrogating data', but also one of producing the researcher 'as self, as identity, as authorial voice and even as research subject' (Pullen, 2006: 278). As such, writing is also a political act that may serve to disrupt dominant organizational hierarchies and forms of knowledge production (Savigny, 2017). Second, we wrote short vignettes which we called 'class episodes'. These were descriptions of situations and events which we considered particularly poignant in classed terms. The purpose was to articulate what Hochschild (2003:16) calls 'magnified moments'; emotionally intense instances or 'episodes of heightened importance' which provide valuable insights into the making and managing of the self. Third, having written and shared our autobiographical notes and class episodes, we met for face-to-face life history conversations to which we brought photographs

of family, friends, and places where we had lived. Norris et al. (2012: 33) support the use of photographs and other artefacts in duoethnographic research 'as sources and evokers of memory'. The conversations unfolded around personal narratives of people, places and memories; a helpful approach for 'inquiring into selfhood' (Davies, 2012: 747). To delve into the past was an important part of the process. The past is not simply an archive of historical events; it continues to make itself known in the present through ongoing constructions of the self (Authors, forthcoming). Conversations are also useful for exploring 'breaches in the individual's sense of identity… in making sense of changes in the sense of self' (Frost, 2009: 9). Through these sessions we gained deeper insights into each other's trajectories as well as our converging and diverging experiences and understandings of ourselves in classed and gendered terms.

The conversations were recorded and transcribed. The analysis included the transcripts (six hours of transcribed recordings), twenty 'class episodes', and our autobiographical notes. We adopted the approach proposed by Nygren and Blom (2001) for analyzing reflective texts, starting with naïve readings of each other's autobiographic notes and class episodes. The naïve readings, addressing the basic question 'What meanings are expressed by these stories?' (Nygren and Blom, 2001: 375), generated a first set of codes. We then cross-read each other's coding, modifying and adding to the preliminary coding as we reflected on, and responded to, each other's interpretations of our stories. Following this we collated codes into themes, locating associated extracts within one or several themes, as there were no clear-cut ways of organizing the material. The transcripts were analyzed following the same procedure. Finally, we reorganized the extracts into storied sections, drawing on all our different text sources to construct narratives that, in different ways, show how we have, or indeed have not, come to understand ourselves in classed and gendered terms. Following Frost (2009) we were particularly interested in instances that expressed breaches to our

subjectively understood identities; situations in which we had felt we were interlopers. Below we provide brief biographical data before presenting two storied sections which outline our experiences of inhabiting or feeling dislocated in(between) spaces. To follow the duoethnographic ethos, the storied sections are written in first person, narrated by either Kristina (from Finland) or Anne (from Wales), with each section covering events related to both of us.

Our stories

Both born in the late 1960s, we grew up in small towns with a part industrial heritage. We were both in homes with siblings and two working parents whose jobs included cleaning, working in a bakery, hairdressing, care work, construction work, and, briefly, factory work before a move into an office environment. The occupations of our parents were key to our self-definitions of being working-class, although in Kristina's case, whose father changed to more middle-class type work in computing early on, the occupational positioning felt less clear-cut. However, looking at parental educational profiles (no specialization or further/higher education) the working-class association felt clear for both of us. After comprehensive school we both went on to do A-levels as the first ones in our extended families. Kristina received the equivalent of straight As[1] while Anne almost failed one of hers, but also achieved an A in English. Going to university was not taken for granted in our families, but Kristina's A-level success set her up for university in a more obvious way than was the case for Anne. The availability of free higher education was an important enabling factor for both of us. Kristina's decision to study Business was based on 'getting a good job'. Anne opted for subjects she was familiar with and good at, and chose English and Drama. Her aim, as recorded in conversation, was to 'postpone my inevitable unemployment' rather than securing a good job. Unemployment was in the end not inevitable for either of us; we both worked for a number of years before returning to academia to do PhDs as mature students. At the time of writing we live and

work in England: Anne at a Russell Group[2] university and Kristina at a small research-intensive one. Anne is married with one child, Kristina has a partner and no children.

Told by Anne: From council house to campus (navigating classed and gendered possibilities)

Having come from a background in Wales where 'everybody lived in a council house', pursuing higher education brought about a new self-awareness. I applied to a university in England and was called to an interview:

> I remember waiting and going into the room and it was an oak-panelled room in this really old building. And it was like no office I'd ever seen… you know, the leather chairs… I thought it was going to be like a job interview…. So, it was just with this one guy and I remember having a conversation about Shakespeare… and it must've gone horribly because [I wasn't accepted]. … I just thought we were going to have a chat about why I wanted to go there … I just went in totally unprepared to talk about Shakespeare in any great depth. … So, yes, totally by surprise, totally flummoxed by it all, and came out and got on the train and went back to Wales. (Life history conversation)

My first encounter with a university environment showed me that I had not understood the rules of the game of the field of academia. I had had no way of finding out how a university interview is conducted, or how to prepare for it as my comprehensive school did not offer advice on interview preparation and both of my parents had left school at 14. Although I had the cultural capital of further education and had developed a love of drama and literature, my lack of other forms of

relevant social and cultural capital became evident as I encountered the practices of higher education and its selective processes. There was also a sense of humiliation at completely misreading the situation, which made me feel that I would not belong at university. Ultimately, I did move to England to study English and Drama, but I opted for a polytechnic.[3] At the time the social distinction between universities and polytechnics was clear, and I decided that people like me would not 'fit' at university, an illustration of how the 'subjective expectations of objective possibilities' (Jenkins, 1992: 72) informs the choices of the habitus. The reflexivity prompted by this experience served to instantiate my interloper status, resulting in the symbolically violent outcome of complicit self-exclusion (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), which seemed 'natural' and desirable.

Reflecting on the experience of my younger self, I can now understand the unequal power dynamic within this situation, and that my comprehensive school education could never have prepared me for the formality and intellectual expectations of such an interview. The experience exemplifies the classed hierarchies of the education system. The privileged knowledge of dominant norms governing how to discuss Shakespeare, was not available to me. I was subsequently positioned as a subordinated, ignorant other, in whom a sense of shame was engendered. I also recognize that I had developed a sense of gendered and classed deference, to men and to authority figures, throughout my upbringing, and a sense of 'knowing your place'. My place was Wales, my place was a council house and a comprehensive school education, my place was a family with no prior experience of higher education. I *only* knew that place.

On entering higher education, we both experienced challenges to our sense of self but, owing to our predisposed different understandings of class, we responded differently. For Kristina the challenge was insidious, exemplified by various episodes where she felt out of place in her physical

appearance and her limited knowledge of the traditions, which underpinned many of the university's social activities. Some such occasions were not simply analytical observations, but marked by discomfort or, more strongly, shame. For example, she remembers attending her first important formal social occasion, the annual ball: 'Everything about me; my hair, makeup and the dress were somehow not right, you could see it was someone who had no idea' (Class episode). Such viscerally imprinted instances are about not having understood tacit taste rules and finding one's habitus un-attuned to the field (Bourdieu, 2002). Rather than excluding herself, Kristina's reflexive response was to adapt to the rules of the game, which in this case became strongly tied to learning to display 'appropriate' femininity through hair, makeup, dress, and comportment. As 'the body is a bearer of symbolic value and a form of physical capital' (Haynes, 2012: 493), then the ways in which the body is rendered presentable speaks of the configurations of symbolic capital in a particular field, including its gendered articulations. Implicit in this project was what can be understood as a disidentification of class; the effort '*not to be* recognized as working class' (Skeggs, 1997: 74, original emphasis). However, due to the socio-cultural circumstances surrounding (in)articulations of class, Kristina interpreted this unknown universe of scripted social interaction, which some seemed to navigate with ease, as revealing an individual lack, resulting in a 'note to self' to develop the necessary knowledge and skills. Meanwhile, I (Anne) had a strong sense of class affiliation and my own reflexive jolt came more abruptly from one of my lecturers, who announced in our first lecture that 'You're all middle-class now'.

> I remember people saying "No! How dare you! We're not middle-class just because we're taking advantage and using our brains!"… So, I guess, that the majority of people in that room considered themselves as working class. (Life history conversation)

My decision to attend polytechnic helped to shore up my classed and gendered habitus. I studied English and Drama; I could wear what I wanted with no need to conform to middle-class ideals of professional femininity, Indeed, I and my fellow classmates would sneer at the 'square' business students. I was also able to resist the imposed symbolic 'reclassification' due to having a large group of like-minded, self-identified working-class students around me, while Kristina felt compelled to emulate the social norms linked with academia, middle-class femininity and those she saw as representing it, with the intended aim of acquiring knowledge and skills to pursue a career. My femininity was never in question, as I had never subscribed to traditional (white, middle-class) femininity, linked as it is with 'docility and fragility' (Skeggs, 2004:24).

Although we have both worked in academia for about a decade, breaches still occur. For me, partaking in graduation as a member of faculty means revealing my polytechnic background (where I also completed my masters and PhD) which, given my current role in a Russell Group university, makes it all the more conspicuous:

> Everyone always comments on my bright robes… and that invariably leads them to ask where I graduated from. It really singles me out from the crowd, in a highly visible way and there's no avoiding that sense of difference. The commoner with her common, garish, robes – the working class girl from a working class university where even the choice of gown shows poor taste! (Class episode)

Experiences of instances like these indicate how one's sense of dis/comfort is linked to the structures of the field. I bear the insignia (robes and hat) of cultural capital in the form of having achieved the highest possible academic award, but in situations like these I am acutely reminded of the hierarchical structures within academia, and my outsider position in my current high-prestige

institution. Meanwhile, even a supposedly shared class background does not necessarily translate into a sense of connection. Kristina told of a conversation with a male academic whom she had recently met:

> We talked about this and that and then he asked me what my parents did. As always I felt a twinge [hearing] that question because I expect my answer to differ from their background. I said my mother is a cleaner and my father 'retired' (voluntary severance). He then cheerily said his mother was a cleaner as well and that he was working class. The sense I got, however, was not one of recognition or some form of bond, but a sense of him wearing the 'working-class badge' with pride in what was to me an unfamiliar or exaggerated manner. As if claiming to be working class gives [him] credentials, while also having had the means not to stay working class. (Class episode)

Experiences like these bring the intersection of class and gender into focus in that we become aware of how classed identities have different gendered leverages. Men can draw on their working-class position in a way that working-class women cannot (Verdi and Ebsworth, 2009; Attfield, 2016). The gendered and classed nature of symbolic capital manifests itself through 'sanctioned forms of visibility in organization' (Tatli and Özbilgin, 2012: 192); that is, patterns of who can make their presence known legitimately and without punishment. As our trajectories have endowed us with changing configurations of capital and as we have become more skilled in presenting ourselves in a supposedly middle-class way as academics, we have also come to monitor ourselves and others for classed displays, including our families. We discuss this in the following section.

Told by Kristina: Imaginary Others (re/directing the classed gaze)

Our experiences of negotiating social fit are shaped by the expectations we have anticipated others would have of us, as well as the ideas we have of what is expected as an outcome of upward mobility, as Anne mused:

> Because you've got the job and because you've got the PhD and because you've got the family and because you've got the husband who's an engineer… of course, you're going to move out to a lovely village, aren't you, with a lovely little school and, you know, have chickens and grow your own, whatever. [...] You know, conspicuous consumption and having a nice car and having the big house – I don't care about that! (Life history conversation)

While Anne acknowledges that her PhD (education) and her engineer husband (occupation) constitute symbolic capital in a middle-class context she resists such a structural positioning (cf. Skeggs, 1997), expressed above through satirical imagery of middle-classness. This is arguably linked to her Welsh working-class roots, and the active rejection of a middle-class identity. However, it is not only the middle-class Other that we frame in stereotypical ways, as I realised when having a conversation with a colleague:

> Talking to [name] after Anne and I decided to do this project. I raise the issue of class and ask him, being English, whether he 'knows' what class people are. I also ask what [class] he is, thinking I have an 'ally' but he says he is solid middle-class and mentions the professions of his parents. I realise that I have mistakenly assumed class similarities because of how he speaks, even when I know about his family background – but other stories about football violence etc. have dominated

> my idea of him. To me football violence is synonymous with working class, that is how I have come to understand the culture here. (Class episode)

It seems, in our search for potential allies, class can sometimes trump gender, perhaps prompted by the need 'to recognize early who are our allies in different struggles' (Naples, 1998:20). I had formed an idea of my colleague's classed position based on cues such as regional accent and the masculine cultural signifier of football violence. These examples are instances of stereotyping both those we seek commonalities with, as well as those we do not identify with; not always in relation to actual people but as a cultural and symbolic construct ('the middle class'). We delineate two camps in relation to which we try to understand who we are and where we might fit, trying to manage our sense of a cleft habitus. This double positioning can cause feelings of embarrassment when witnessing certain behaviours that, due to our class journey, take on new meanings. Anne told of her wedding, which brought together her English middle-class husband's family with her Welsh relatives:

> I did feel… in some ways I felt ashamed of my family… Part of me really liked it. Ah, these people, ah, I haven't seen them in a really long time. Oh, it's lovely to see them. But, part of me was like, they are a bloody nightmare… They're so loud and raucous and get drunk and sing and… it's a stereotype of a working-class Welsh person and they were living up to that stereotype... There's a sense of shame and that's a very hard thing to say because… at the same time I feel guilty. Who am I? How can I say this about my family? (Life history conversation)

The wedding provoked conflicting feelings of affection, embarrassment and guilt produced by clashing classed expressions, and a realisation that one's community of origin might be the target

of critical judgement – including one's own. It was also distressing as it challenged Anne's assumed working-class sensibility, and suggested she had developed a middle-class perspective on her family, leading her to view them negatively and creating a symbolic distance to them, and disrupting the notions of collectivism and communalism, so strongly held in Welsh working-class culture (cf. Evans, 2005). Anne also felt a betrayal of her Welsh roots where, in her youth, the English were seen as the epitome of middle-classness, with highly negative connotations. To be positioned as middle class was, therefore, also to be no longer truly Welsh; an interloper within her own family. This reflexive rift with the field of the family engenders a sense of being an interloper within our home communities as we now see what we once considered 'normal' as deviant and potentially embarrassing. In turn, we see ourselves as deviating from familial habitus in ways that are potentially demeaning or incomprehensible to our family. We begin to recognize the embodied symbolic capital associated with our own and others' classed and gendered habitus. For example, I remember becoming aware of my mother moving 'in a working class way'. Her aches and pains which I can remember since childhood, and which affect her gait, are the result of a lifetime of putting her body to work. My sudden noticing of what had always been there – a jolt, as what was once familiar revealed itself – produced two points of reflection. First, I became aware of how differently our life trajectories were written on our bodies. While my mother and I share many physical similarities, I saw how differently our bodies have been shaped by work. Long hours of standing on my feet or doing physically demanding work such as shifting people confined to their beds – traditionally feminized, undervalued labour – has never been part of my world of work. I have also had the financial resources to address intermittent neck and shoulder pains resulting from my sedentary work, through massages and other treatments. Furthermore, I think there is a difference in how we view what our bodies are for: something to care for and sometimes pamper,

or something which is primarily a vessel for work. Second, I felt guilt at her becoming the target of my scrutinizing gaze, following my own experiences of felt scrutiny in academia. As Hartsock (2006: 182) says, 'bodies tell stories, but those stories are mediated in complex ways by a variety of social relations'. As I suddenly not just observed but *felt* class performed through her body by viewing it from the outside while knowing it from the inside through my years of growing up, I had a sense of being torn. This was an instance of the cleft habitus making itself known; 'divided against itself, and doomed to a kind of double perception of self' (Bourdieu, 1999: 511). The sense of breach is not only evident in our experience of academia, with its dilemmas of what to reveal and conceal, but also in relation to our home community. It seems we have become interlopers in more ways than one: within academia, within our family and within ourselves.

Discussion: The interloper as historicized, reflexive and socially situated

Our analysis of our experiences, framed by the concept of the interloper, centres on breaches; magnified moments (Hochschild, 2003), which provide insight into how we come to understand ourselves and others as classed and gendered, rather than taking those categories for granted (cf. Tatli and Özbilgin, 2012). Our situated knowledge provides a classed and gendered standpoint on the fields of home and academia, which we continue to move between. This movement creates tensions and a cleft in our selves through the situated knowledge embedded in 'our lives as we live them in the local particularities …. in which our bodily being anchors us' (Smith, 1997: 393). The situated knowledge of women, 'who are not allowed *not* to have a body' (Haraway, 1988: 575, original emphasis), comes from a standpoint of separation from those whose bodies, dispositions and forms of capital appear to effortlessly 'fit'. Such a standpoint underpins the interloper concept, informing a sense of dislocation, and the tensions inherent in resisting and conforming to expectations, while viewing these expectations as somehow undermining and challenging the

historical and cultural affiliations of both our past and present lives, which are intimately entangled, yet starkly separated. The interloper develops from the resulting reflexivity, prompted by our situated knowledge, and a cleft habitus, 'torn by… internal divisions', and the incongruent 'dispositions associated with different states or stages' (Bourdieu, 2000: 160-161).

In looking at our writings and transcripts we noticed the extent to which we had recounted events in the past to try to explain our current professional self-understandings. Having insight into the past was clearly necessary to analyze 'the interplay between past and present and individual and collective phenomena to make sense of cultural behaviour and experience' (Baker and Brown, 2008: 58). The key fields we identified as crucial for our sense of self were family and academia; fields which, according to Bourdieu (1996, 1977) have great bearing on habitus. Likewise, a feminist standpoint helps us articulate the interloper as a relational concept, which hinges on our situated experience as working-class women, moving back and forth between the fields of home community and academia. Tellingly, we had both felt that the transition and continued movement between the two have brought about significant readjustments to the self as 'capital is transformed throughout life histories' (McCall, 1992: 840). Although our coming to understand ourselves in classed and gendered terms was dissimilar due to the social, cultural and political circumstances of our formative years, we however also recognized similar experiences of a lack of fit, and not 'getting it right' (Skeggs, 1997: 87). This gave us the possibility to inquire into our intersubjective understanding of class and gender, while our different backgrounds also opened up to us the 'culturally specific classification systems [that] people draw on to make sense of their and other people's way of life' (Jarness and Friedman, 2017: 15). We brought our understandings of class to academia from our home communities.

Entering academia brought hitherto unreflexive aspects of ourselves into view, as well as the awareness of how they might be seen from the perspective of others. Class felt deeply 'under [our] skin' (Kuhn, 1995: 98) is never shaken off, and particular events brings it into relief in various ways. Events that had jolted us into awareness of our interloper status were often expressed in embodied terms; perhaps no surprise as the body is the 'most indisputable materialization of class tastes' (Skeggs, 1997: 82). Working-class women's bodies in particular are viewed as prone to 'violations of taste' (Lawler, 2005: 429) and hence endowed with negative symbolic capital. Experiences of not corresponding to valorized representations of femininity may produce feelings of shame (Loveday, 2016), such as Kristina's experience of the university ball or Anne's response to her loud and raucous family wedding guests. These are instances of social structures manifesting themselves on a personal, visceral level (Skeggs, 1997), and indicative of ongoing negotiations of inhabiting different fields. While transitions between fields produce a cleft habitus, Abrahams and Ingram (2013) note that it might also engender an ability to navigate fields in a chameleon-like manner. However, while the chameleon metaphor indicates a complete blending in with one's surroundings, the interloper concept draws attention to the underlying sense of transgression at the point of 'apparent complicity' (McNay, 1999: 108). The interloper is not necessarily denied entry, but her being in the field is marked by ongoing moves to respond to its demands. As our stories show, these moves can be characterized by both resistance and adaptation, and they are shaped by past experiences and perceptions of one's own and others' place and possibilities in the field.

Ahmed (2007), referring to Bourdieu, explains how social positions can be understood in terms of embodied orientations, which afford actors differing degrees of manoeuvring capabilities. The fact that symbolic capital is mediated by for example gender, class, and race (Jones, 2015; McCall, 1992) and is field-specific means that we need to be attentive to how the interloper is constituted

on varying grounds in particular contexts. We are never interlopers in every sense; for example, whiteness has afforded us substantial advantage. As such, it is worth remembering, as Ahmed (2012: 35) points out, that the arrival of an outsider often 'tells us more about what is already in place than about "who" arrives'. The concept of the interloper, in examining the conditions surrounding the arrival of an outsider, is also analytically relevant for unpacking 'what is already in place'. The interloper cannot 'unsee' bodies and practices which previously were hidden under a shroud of unreflexive familiarity but which now come into consciousness as a result of moving between fields. One effect of the breaches resulting from our movement between fields is that we have turned a classed gaze onto our 'past selves' (cf. Kuhn, 1995) as much as onto the perceived middle-class Other. On the one hand, if not reflected on, this might produce the unintended effect of becoming hired wardens of the realm we have entered as interlopers through policing ourselves as well as others, thus making us complicit in the reproduction of its normative values and practices. On the other hand, this can be seized as an opportunity for scrutinizing how fields are constituted through what they arbitrarily but convincingly present as natural and valued, and how. As such, it allows us to examine the possibilities of social change, at an individual and collective level, as well as how social closure mechanisms operate. The bifocal vision of the interloper enables a questioning of taken for granted social mechanisms and hierarchies in both fields. Understanding how one's position is contingent on multiple intersecting differences also opens up a space to create new solidarities by questioning the assumptions we make about how to recognize 'allies', and where we might find them.

Inhabiting different fields is not polarized between complete belonging and complete alienation; instead, there are partial and shifting degrees of closeness and distance. We are unlikely to feel like a 'fish in water' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:127) in either our home communities or academia,

or to unproblematically live their gendered and classed practices. In this respect we are forced to acknowledge internal conflicts emerging from a cleft habitus (Bourdieu, 2000), and the recognition that we may be positioned (and position ourselves) as interlopers in both realms. We argue that this is not only a manifestation of 'the contradictory effects and dissonance of crossing different fields' (McLeod, 2005: 12) but also of *re-crossing* and navigating these social spaces throughout our lives. In doing so these spaces become both 'known' and 'not known'. In this way our classed and gendered forms of habitus and capital can be seen as both enduring *and* transitory, but always in relation to the field of home or academia and our continued movement between the two. We may experience social mobility but can never be socially settled in one space or the other.

Conclusion

In this paper we have argued for the value of the concept of the interloper as contributing to research on the dynamics of social dislocation as the ongoing movement between different fields. The betwixt and betweenness of the interloper provides us with an analytical concept that, unlike the psychological and pathologized imposter syndrome, is historicized, reflexive and socially situated. Given our different backgrounds we have been able to reflect on our shared understandings of what has affected our trajectories, but also how our different origins have made us interpret the social world as given to us in particular ways, and how this has shaped our actions. This sharply draws attention to how social categories and relations are co-constitutive with the context they appear in. Ultimately, the interloper represents a specific standpoint, reflecting the situated knowledge of those who are nominally unwelcome and positioned as different. The aim, then, is not to try to establish a universal set of characteristics of an interloper, but to examine how, when, and where individuals or groups become interlopers. While the concept of the interloper furthers understanding of the social dynamics of instances of breach, it also enables the unpacking of

existing, taken for granted field-specific social forces that do not normally make themselves known. In other words, it enables us to also reflexively interrogate those moments when we effortlessly belong.

The usefulness of the concept of the interloper is not confined to class and gender, but can also be employed to understand other social identities and forms of difference in organizations. Such analyses view differences as relational, situated and discoverable in moments of experienced breach, rather than framing them as a ready-made set of clearly delineated categories. The interloper thus provides a means through which to examine how differences are constituted in particular fields, and how they are articulated through embodied practices. While demanding to negotiate, the transgressing position of the interloper is also imbued with radical potential.

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[1] The equivalent qualification in Finland is the matriculation exam.

[2] Reflective of a society marked by strong classed hierarchies, the UK university system is organized into strata of universities classified by prestige, with the so-called Russell Group consisting of 24 research intensive, world-leading UK universities including Oxford and Cambridge, taking the elite position. Our affiliations formally position us in different locations of the academic field.

[3] Polytechnics or 'polys' were positioned as being suitable for bright working class children in being more focused on vocational subjects.